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THE BLACK AND WHITE FLYCATCHER *BIAS MUSICUS* IN KENYA

Britton (1980) describes the Black and White Flycatcher *Bias musicus* as unrecorded in coastal Kenya for over 50 years, though suggesting that it might still occur in Rabai and Ribe forests. I can trace no recent records from inland Kenya either, apart from a single male specimen in the National Museum, Nairobi, that was collected at Maua in the Nyambeni Hills, Meru District in 1944, apparently by J.P. Benson (G.R. Cunningham-van Someren, pers. comm.). The racial identity of this apparently disjunct Meru population has not been properly determined; White (1963) gave the range of *changawensis* as "Kenya inland to the eastern side of the rift" but it is not clear whether he examined any specimen from Meru District.

Very little now remains of the Nyambeni Forest, but about 20 km east of Maua lies the little-known Ngaia Forest, covering about 36 km² at a much lower altitude than the Nyambeni Forest (1100-1400 m). On 26 November 1978, during an investigation of the ecology and avifauna of the forest (Diamond & V.C. Fayad, unpubl.) I heard a harsh nasal call note from a flycatcher about 10 m up in a broad-leaved tree. The bird was identified as a female *Bias musicus*; I did not know the species, and was not aware of its present rarity in Kenya, but the short chestnut tail, very broad black bill, conspicuous white eye, white underparts, black crown and chestnut upperparts cannot be confused with any other species. The bird was foraging actively for insects beneath the edge of the canopy, frequently flying up to pick insects from the underside of a leaf as well as sallying out to catch them in mid-air, and it remained under observation for over five minutes. It was easy to find on subsequent days once the call was heard, but I came across no more in the forest. If Ngaia Forest is its last refuge in inland Kenya, other than any that may persist in the remaining vestiges of the Nyambeni Forest, then its status must be regarded as threatened since the Ngaia Forest is being rapidly over-exploited for timber, charcoal and poles.

The sighting reported above is referred to by Britton (1980).

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We are sorry for the late appearance of this note. Ed.